UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 5

DATE: October 6, 2000

SUBJECT: Reports of Significant Developments and Activities Ending on September 29, 2000

FROM: William E. Muno, Director
Superfund Division

TO: Francis X. Lyons
Regional Administrator

David A. Ullrich
Deputy Regional Administrator

The activities listed below are organized by site-specific activities, other significant developments, and training/conferences:

SITE-SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

Response, Commonwealth Edison Transformer Fire, Chicago, Illinois

On September 9, 2000, United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) Betty Lavis, with Superfund Technical Assistance and Response Team (START) support, responded to a request for assistance from the City of Chicago, Illinois. Black smoke pouring out of an underground excavation site at the intersection of Dearborn and Wacker Drive had caused the Chicago Fire Department to evacuate several adjacent buildings, close local streets, and reroute traffic in the area. An investigation by the Fire Department revealed that during ongoing construction activities, a contractor for Commonwealth Edison (ComEd) accidently caused an underground transformer fire.

When OSC Lavis arrived on the scene, the fire had been put out, but the area was still closed off because of concerns that the transformer had released polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). Power failure and closed streets were causing a considerable traffic jam and raising concerns about disruption to public transportation. The Chicago Fire Department,

however, was primarily concerned about fire fighters and local citizens who had been exposed to the smoke, and needed to decide whether they should be decontaminated. OSC Lavis discussed the situation with ComEd officials and requested a material safety data sheet (MSDS) for the transformer in question, which confirmed there were no PCBs or any other hazardous material present in the transformer. It was not necessary to decontaminate the exposed personnel. Com-Ed began repairs to the electrical system and disposing of the water used to put out the fire under the supervision of the City of Chicago Department of Environment.

Contact: Betty Lavis (312-886-7183)

Removal Completed, St. Clair Oil Site, Annapolis, Illinois

On July 25, 2000, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Oil and Gas Division, informed U.S. EPA Emergency Response that a release of crude oil was occurring at the St. Clair Oil site, and abandoned tank battery in Annapolis, Illinois, and requested assistance. On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) Betty Lavis responded, opened an oil fund account for the site, and mobilized the Emergency and Rapid Response Service (ERRS) contractor to the site. The St. Clair site consisted of 19 half full tanks of crude oil in a large oil filled leaking secondary structure. Crude oil had overflowed to a ditch that flows to a tributary of Big Creek, a 1/4 mile away. The contractor began pumping out the oil on July 29, 2000, and continued to pump until the morning of August 4, 2000. The contractor demobilized.

The final phase of the removal began August 14, 2000, and was completed on September 14, 2000. All tanks and piping were pumped out, removed from the pit area, and scanned for radioactivity. Naturally occurring radioactive material can be a problem at crude oil production sites. Tanks and piping with levels below background radiation levels were disposed of off-site. Those above background will be disposed of under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) authority. Sludge in the tanks and pit was solidified with fly ash. A total of 116,000 gallons of liquid oil/water and 3,170 tons of solidified sludge were disposed of off-site. The site was backfilled, graded, and seeded to prevent erosion.

Contact: Betty Lavis (312-886-7183)

Response, McKinley Creek Gasoline Spill, Painesville Township, Ohio

On September 26, 2000, U.S. EPA On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) Jim Augustyn responded to a request for assistance from the Lake County Health Department with a gasoline spill from a 16-inch clay tile into a drainage ditch that leads to McKinley Creek, a tributary of Lake Erie. OSC Jim Augustyn responded with Superfund Technical Assistance & Response Team (START) and Emergency and Rapid Response Services (ERRS) personnel, and installed a siphon dam in the ditch to contain the gasoline sheen. Prior to U.S. EPA's arrival, the Lake County Utility Department ran a subsurface video camera through the pipe and found no connections or sources for the gasoline. ERRS mobilized a backhoe to conduct exploratory excavations to determine the extent of contamination. On September 26 and 27, 2000, the Ohio Bureau of Underground Storage Tank Registry (BUSTR) investigated two local gas stations and discovered one that had gasoline leaking from its leak detection system. BUSTR will require the owner to install three groundwater monitoring wells and take three soil bore samples. Tank integrity testing indicated that the storage tanks were intact. On September 28, 2000, ERRS determined that contamination extended approximately 425 feet along the pipe. Dye testing of area storm drains could not identify any connections to the 16-inch clay tile from the gas station. Water samples taken by the Health Department from the tap at the gas station tested positive for gasoline contamination. U.S. EPA will conduct geoprobe investigations to determine if a potential plume of gasoline from the gas station has migrated to and infiltrated into the 16-inch clay tile.

Contact: Jim Augustyn (440-250-1742)

Construction Completed (Tamarack Stamp Sands Parcel), Torch Lake Superfund Site, Houghton County, Michigan

The Torch Lake Superfund site remedial action is well underway with the completion in September 2000 of construction activities on a 140-acre mine waste parcel referred to as the "Tamarack stamp sands." In 1999, construction activities were completed on the "Lake Linden stamp sand" parcel, which totaled 114 acres. The Torch Lake Superfund site is located

on the Keweenaw Peninsula in Houghton County, Michigan. Due to the size of the site, the area was divided into three operable units (OU): 1) the western shore of Torch Lake; 2) surface water, sediments, and groundwater in and around Torch Lake and other area waterways; and, 3) 12 former milling and smelting operations located throughout the mid-Keweenaw Peninsula.

Remedies include a soil and vegetative cover over the mine waste piles in OUs 1 and 3 to reduce metal loadings to the lakes. Construction on the soil and vegetative covers began in the summer of 1999 on OU 1 (Lake Linden) and is anticipated to be completed for the entire site by 2003. So far, over 250 acres of barren mine waste piles have been restored to green spaces. U.S. EPA has been able to use local construction firms, providing a much needed boost to the local economy, and there are numerous plans for appropriate and responsible redevelopment of large areas of the site, including recreational parks, historic parks, commercial businesses, and residential developments.

Contact: Steve Padovani (312-353-6755)

Record of Decision & Preliminary Close Out Report Signed, Ionia City Landfill Superfund Site, Ionia, Michigan

On September 28, 2000, the Record of Decision (ROD) and Preliminary Close Out Report (PCOR) were signed for the Ionia City Landfill Superfund site in Ionia, Michigan. The ROD calls for continued operation of the pump and treat system installed as part of an earlier removal action, natural attenuation for volatile organic compounds (VOCs) outside the influence of the pump and treat system, and institutional controls to maintain the existing soil cover and prohibit installation of drinking water and irrigation wells. The estimated cost of the remedy is $2.2 million.

Contact: Tom Short (312-353-8826)

Record of Decision & Preliminary Close Out Report Signed, Sparta Landfill Superfund Site, Sparta, Michigan

On September 27, 2000, the Superfund Division Director, William E. Muno, signed a Record of Decision (ROD) and a Preliminary Close Out Report (PCOR) for the Sparta Landfill

Superfund site in Sparta, Michigan. The ROD remedy was no further action with groundwater monitoring. The final remedy consists of groundwater monitoring along with operation and maintenance of the landfill cap that was constructed in 1995. The sampling of monitoring wells will be required to verify the effectiveness and adequacy of the landfill cap. The remedy will also include monitoring of water wells near the site to ensure that the cap is protective. The groundwater monitoring program may involve installation of monitoring wells. Since waste will be left in place, groundwater monitoring and five-year reviews will be conducted. Since the final remedy calls for no additional construction, beyond the installation of monitoring wells, all construction activities are now complete. The PCOR documents the completion of construction activities.

Contacts: Scott Hansen (312-886-1999)
Mark Geall (312-353-9538)

Five-Year Review Completed, Cross Brothers Superfund Site, Pembroke Township, Illinois

On August 31, 2000, a Five-Year Review was completed for the Cross Brothers Superfund site. The Cross Brothers Superfund site is approximately 20-acres in size and is located in Pembroke Township, near Momence, Illinois. In general, the five-year review process concluded that the groundwater pump and treat system is in compliance with the requirements of the Record of Decision (ROD), and is operating as intended in the remedial design; and, that the remedies at the site remain protective of human health and the environment.

Contact: Steve Padovani (312-353-6755)

Pre-final Inspection & Preliminary Close Out Report Signed, Reilly Tar & Chemical Corp. (Dover Plant) Superfund Site, Dover, Ohio

On September 27, 2000, a pre-final inspection was conducted at the Reilly Tar & Chemical Corp. (Dover Plant) Superfund site in Dover, Ohio. An Ohio Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) subtitle D solid waste cap, a passive collection trench, 30 inches of soil cover and an additional 1-foot thick layer of common borrow have been installed over the Summer. Approximately 7,500 cubic yards of soil were placed in the

empty building foundation, approximately 4,700 tons of soil and sediment were transported off-site for thermal treatment and disposal, and 2,800 tons of soil were transported off-site for disposal. Approximately 2,000 tons of clay were placed over the building foundation and approximately 34,200 tons of soil were brought to the site for final grading.

A Preliminary Site Closeout Report (PCOR) was signed by the Region on September 29, 2000.

Contact: Tom Short (312-353-8826)

Radioactive Scanning Continues, Lindsay Light II Site, Chicago, Illinois

During the week of September 25, 2000, as part of a strategy to determine the extent of Lindsay Light radioactive thorium contamination in the North Chicago Loop (Streeterville) area, 5 parking lots and one street were scanned for gamma ray emissions. Two parking lots and one street showed clear elevations of gamma emission rates. These areas will require further investigation to determine the extent of contamination, the identity of the contaminants, and whether these are actually thorium wastes that can be linked to the Lindsay sites. In addition to several streets, this currently brings the number of Lindsay Light sites to six, only one of which is fully decontaminated. Radiation surveys are anticipated at a minimum of 4 more parking lots and 2 more building sites.

Contacts: Larry Jensen (312-886-5026)
Verneta Simon (312-886-3601)
Fred Micke (312-886-5123)

Redevelopment Prospective Purchaser Agreement (Salem Baptist Church), Pullman Brownfields Site, South Side, Chicago, Illinois

On September 14, 2000, notice of an Agreement and Covenant Not to Sue, Prospective Purchaser Agreement (PPA) for a portion of the Pullman/Liquid Dynamics site on the South Side of Chicago was published in the Federal Register. Pursuant to the terms of the PPA, the Salem Baptist Church agrees to purchase, remediate, and redevelop a substantial portion of the site in return for a covenant not to sue for past response costs under

the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) and a release from future liability for existing contamination. The site is the location of the historic Pullman Palace Car Company, which has been a Brownfields Site for many years. The Church proposes to utilize the former Pullman factory site to construct a campus consisting of a community center, a sanctuary, an administrative building, and a retail center.

The Salem Baptist Church work plan entails removal of underground storage tanks and asbestos-contaminated material in the Pullman Northern and Southern Areas and development to implement the equivalent of a Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Type D cap over the entire Pullman portion of the Site. The development would consist of a combination of building foundations and pads, clay and soil covers, and asphalt and concrete parking areas. The remedy in the work plan is acceptable to U.S. EPA as sufficient to protect public health and the environment. U.S. EPA plans to pursue potentially responsible parties for final cleanup of the Liquid Dynamics Area.

Contact: Reginald A. Pallesen (312-886-0555)

OTHER SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS

Ongoing Mercury-Regulator Situation, MichCon Gas Company, Detroit, Michigan

On September 26, 2000, the MichCon Gas Company (MichCon) notified 35 customers on the recent spills list that their homes will have to be sampled. On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) Ralph Dollhopf and Mick Hans, Office of Public Affairs, were interviewed by local radio on the MichCon mercury situation. On September 27, 2000, the first houses confirmed that they would allow access and were scheduled for joint sampling. By September 28, 2000, the house count allowing access rose to 13 of 35 for sampling.

The OSCs and Office of Regional Counsel are planning to meet with MichCon to resolve its reluctance to commit to sampling the entire universe of mercury regulator homes, estimated by MichCon to be as high as 15 percent of its 1.2 million customer base of 180,000 homes.

Contacts: Ralph Dollhopf (734-692-7682)
Jason El-Zein (734-692-7661)
Tom Krueger (312-886-0562)
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Mick Hans (312-353-5050)
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TRAINING/CONFERENCES

Oil Spill Exercise, Trenton, Michigan and Toledo, Ohio

On September 20-21, 2000, the Emergency Response Branch (ERB) staff participated in a government-led unified command oil spill exercise in Trenton, Michigan and Toledo, Ohio. This simulated exercise presented a worst case spill occurring at the lower end of the Detroit River, affecting the river itself, Gibraltar Bay to the Huron River, Lake Erie, Trenton Channel, and the Maumee River. The simulated 100,000 gallons of oil spilled when two barges collided, which made a significant impact to animals and animal habitats in the water and the shoreline. This exercise tested the adequacy of newly revised U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. EPA area plans, a unified

command, and On-Scene Coordinators response actions. Organizing a joint information center and using the recently adopted Joint Information Center model to handle a myriad of simulated media and community calls was a major part in the communications aspect of the exercise. Detroit Edison participated as a member in the unified command as an interested party. Other participants included the responsible parties, American Steamship, Hannah Barge, and some 40 Federal, State, City, and County personnel. U.S. EPA staff participated in the roles of evaluators, observers, controllers, and players. A similar exercise is planned in Chicago in May 2001. Chris Christenson is on the planning committee in the Chicago spill exercise.

Contacts: Mark Durno (440-250-1743)
Ginny Narsete (312-886-4359)
Chris Christenson (312-353-6303)
Sheila Calovich (312-353-1505)
Jason El Zein (734-692-7661)

Area Spill Exercise, Cleveland, Ohio

On September 27, 2000, Sheila Calovich, Joe Fredle, Mark Durno, and Karla Auker (Emergency Response Branch) participated in the government led Preparedness for Response Exercise Program (PREP) in Cleveland, Ohio. The scenario for this U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) led exercise consisted of disabled vessel leaking oil near the Lorain, Ohio, shoreline. This exercise tested the USCG Incident Command System, communications, and inter-agency cooperation. Several State and local agency representatives also participated in this exercise. Sheila Calovich and Mark Durno served as exercise evaluators, Joe Fredle served on the exercise design team, and Karla Auker was a player in the Operations Section.

Contact: Sheila Calovich (312-353-1505)

Wisconsin Governor's Conference on Emergency Management and Regional Response Team Meeting, Appleton, Wisconsin

On September 26-27, 2000, Glenn Cekus represented the Office of Chemical Emergency Preparedness and Prevention (OCEPP) at the annual Wisconsin Governor's Conference on Emergency Management in Appleton, Wisconsin. Approximately 700 participants took part and attended various break-out sessions

addressing issues such as becoming a disaster resistant community, emergency planning for schools, and disaster planning for people with special needs. Sessions on terrorism assessment, Wisconsin's hazardous materials response system, and a public official's role in counter-terrorism were particularly of interest. U.S. EPA On-Scene Coordinator Steve Renninger and Public Affairs Specialist Ginny

Narsete provided a well received and attended presentation addressing the catastrophic failure and collapse of bulk storage tanks containing agricultural chemicals.

Contact: Glenn Cekus (312-353-6449)

Meeting, Regional Response Team, Appleton, Wisconsin

On September 27-28, 2000, Byron Maggos, of Office of Chemical Emergency Preparedness and Prevention (OCEPP), attended the Regional Response Team meeting in Appleton, Wisconsin at the Outagamie County Board Room. The Regional Response Team (RRT) members from several Federal agencies and two of the six Region 5 States, as well as other interested parties attended. Presentations describing the June 8, 2000, Jackson, Michigan, pipeline spill of gasoline, a mercury response case study, and a briefing of a drill (Operation Cruiser) at the Port of Milwaukee were presented. The State representatives and the Federal agency representatives reported on recent activities. The next meeting will be held in January 2001, in either Chicago, Illinois, or the Twin Cities of Minnesota.

Contact: Byron Maggos (312-353-8184)

Spill Prevention, Control and Countermeasure Presentation, Washtenaw County Environmental Health and Pollution Agency's Pollution Prevention (P2) Conference, Ann Arbor, Michigan

On September 26, 2000, Bob McCoy, Spill Prevention, Control and Countermeasures (SPCC) Inspector, spoke before the Washtenaw County Environmental Health and Pollution Agency's P2 Conference in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The conference was attended by owner/operators of facilities, engineers/consultants, and State and local governmental regulators. The main topic of the presentation was an overview of the SPCC Rule, Title 40 Code of Federal Regulations Section 112. In addition, guidance was provided on preparing and updating plans. Examples of various properly designed systems that meet the requirements of the Rule were also presented.

Contact: Bob McCoy (312-886-0185)

Meeting, Greater St. Louis Sub-Area Planning, St. Louis, Missouri

On September 28 ,2000, the Greater St. Louis sub-area planning meeting was held at the St. Louis Federal Building in St Louis, Missouri. Representatives were from U.S. EPA Region 5; U.S. EPA Region 7; U.S. EPA Region 7 Superfund Technical Assistance & Response Team (START) contractor; U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)-Marine Safety Office - St. Louis; Upper Mississippi River Basin Association (UMRBA); Missouri Department of Natural Resources; Illinois Environmental Protection Agency; Illinois Emergency Management Agency; St Charles County Local Emergency Planning Committee; St. Louis Metro Sewer District; Madison County Emergency Management Agency (EMA); and, St. Clair County EMA.

The group began the meeting by discussing communication protocol at the County EMA levels during an incident that would involve multiple jurisdictions. Each local governmental entity described what capabilities they had available. Communications issues discussed included equipment availability, compatibility, and potential problems. A survey will be sent out to each local entity involved with the sub-area to determine the capabilities of each County. Language for the sub-area plan will be drafted that will determine what procedures will be used in case of an incident that affects multiple jurisdictions. Other topics discussed by the group involved review of sewer district maps for the sub-area, the status of the mapping atlas, and review of revisions suggested by UMRBA. The next meeting is scheduled for November 9, 2000.

Contact: Barbi Lee (312-886-5296)

cc: Steve Herman (OECA)
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